



California State Legislature
Democratic Study Group
Hon. Mervyn M. Dymally, Chair

Press Release - June 18, 2003

Members Demand Fair Taxes To Balance State Budget

Sacramento, CA - Today, Assembly Member Mervyn Dymally (D-Compton) assembled 13 progressive Democratic legislators for a press conference to express their opposition to further cuts in the state budget without fair taxes.

The group represented members of the Democratic Study Group and those in attendance included: Mervyn Dymally, Judy Chu, Jackie Goldberg Loni Hancock, Christine Kehoe, Paul Koretz, Mark Leno, Lloyd Levine, John Longville, Cindy Montanez, Gene Mullin, Fabian Nunez, and Mark Ridley-Thomas.

Selected quotes from the press conference are as follows:

Assemblyman Dymally (D-Compton), chair of the Democratic Study Group, stated, *"I am impressed that over half the members of the Democratic Study Group appeared and made articulate statements about the budget".* Assemblyman Dymally further stated, *"The unanimous position of the Democratic Study Group is to use a balanced approach in addressing the budget. That approach should include cuts and revenue enhancements."*

Assembly Member Judy Chu (D-Monterey Park), Chair of the Budget Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, stated *"We have eliminated positions, reduced administrative spending and cut direct services to the indigent and disabled to balance the budget, yet the Republicans continue to resist taxing the wealthy... They resist even though increasing the top tax rates would only affect 2.4% of the tax paying population and mostly those who earn over \$1.5 million per year. I've said it before and I'll say it again... Why should seniors eat cat food while the rich eat caviar?"*

Assembly Member Loni Hancock (D-Berkeley) stated *"We are facing a budget deficit of historic proportions, and, unless we find additional revenues, all programs are at risk. I believe that we cannot simply cut our way out of this crisis and will have to raise fees and taxes to save our schools, health care services and other critical programs."*

Assembly Member Christine Kehoe (D-San Diego) stated *"A realistic budget solution has to consider the needs of the entire state. We cannot unfairly burden the poor and the middle class while disregarding viable revenue options that are available to us."*

Assembly Member Mark Leno (D-San Francisco) stated *"Let me dispel a huge myth, dare I say lie, that Democrats just want to raise taxes and Republicans want to make deeper cuts. It is simply not true. Republicans don't want to make cuts, and they refuse to raise taxes. So one must ask, exactly what will they do to balance our budget? More than half of the Assembly Republicans, 17 out of 32, have voted against budget cuts this year, compared to only 3 Democrats. In this time of fiscal crisis, we are left with only poor choices - make cuts and raise taxes. It is our job and responsibility to do both. Step up to the plate, Republican colleagues."*

Assembly Member Paul Koretz (D-West Hollywood) stated *"I represent one of the wealthiest communities in the state, and so far not one person has told me they have a problem with slightly increasing income taxes on millionaires."* Assemblyman Koretz further said, *"But Jim Brulte's threat to take out any Republican who votes for a tax increase makes it just about impossible to pass a budget. He's obviously more interested in playing politics than preventing the state from collapsing around us."*

Assembly Member Mark Ridley-Thomas (D-Los Angeles) stated *"None of here today are willing to be intimidated into silence. We have a duty to speak out against this rabid form of irresponsibility that has brought us into budget gridlock. We can't do it alone. Therefore, those who are stuck on stupid need to give Californians a break."*

Assembly Member Jackie Goldberg (D-Los Angeles) stated *"It's absolutely irresponsible to pass a budget for 03-04 that you know will cause catastrophic cuts in the next two years."*